



The President's Daily Brief

12 October 1972



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam, heavy fighting continues in the provinces just north of Saigon amid indications that a "spectacular" enemy move against the capital may be imminent. (Page 1)

[redacted] the planned Communist strike south of Quang Tri City that was expected in late August was frustrated by a combination of poor coordination and allied pre-emption. (Page 2)

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[redacted] Japan [redacted] (Page 3)

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Communist forces in Cambodia have occupied a number of government positions along Route 2, but government troops are making slow progress in their efforts to reopen Route 5. (Page 4)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy fighting continues in the provinces just north of Saigon. South Vietnamese Rangers and local security forces engaged an element of a newly arrived sapper unit 12 miles north of downtown Saigon on 11 October, and at last report the battle was continuing. Another major enemy unit, the 205th Independent Regiment, also moved into the southern part of the province, and the forward command post of the Communists' sapper command has been located in Gia Dinh Province less than 15 miles northwest of the capital.

Enemy units, including at least one of battalion size, have been seen in the southernmost districts of Binh Duong Province. These forces were said to be in uniform and well-armed and were under orders not to engage South Vietnamese forces unless attacked.

Noting this increased Communist activity, General Weyand expects that a "spectacular" enemy move against Saigon may be imminent and has ordered special security measures.

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VIETNAM

We now [] explain why the Communists failed to launch their expected major strike south of Quang Tri City in late August. The strike, designed to cut off and defeat South Vietnamese troops seeking to recapture Quang Tri City, apparently was frustrated by a combination of poor coordination and allied pre-emption. []

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[] an "all-out offensive" had been planned for late August, following the arrival of two additional regiments in the area. Some of these forces arrived later than expected, however, causing indecision that resulted in attack orders being issued and canceled several times. [] the offensive was finally rescheduled for 4 September. By then, however, the South Vietnamese buildup in the area just prior to the final government assault on Quang Tri City apparently caused additional delays and disruptions.

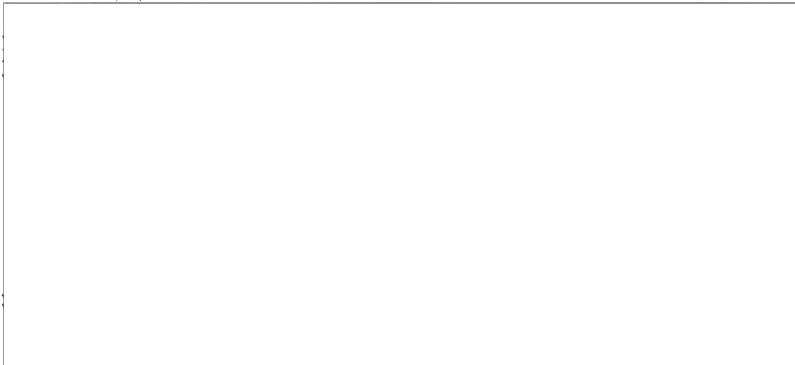
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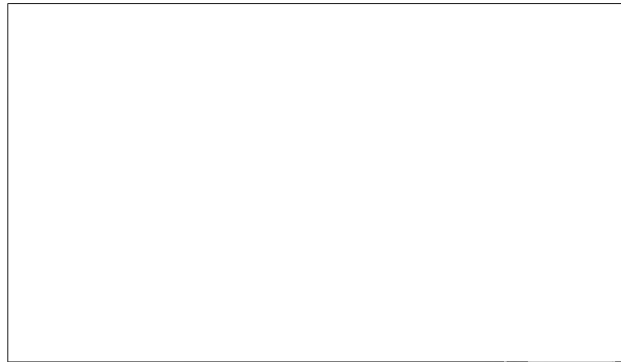
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JAPAN

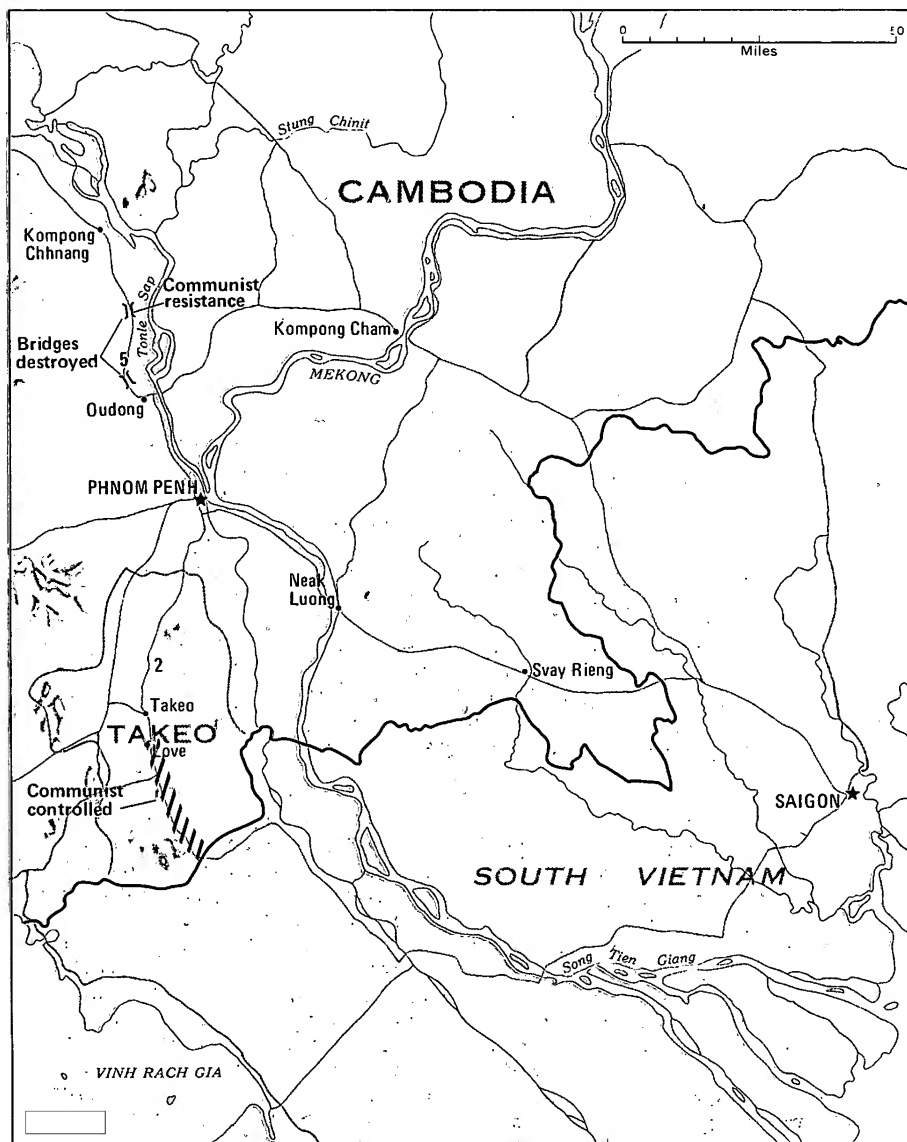


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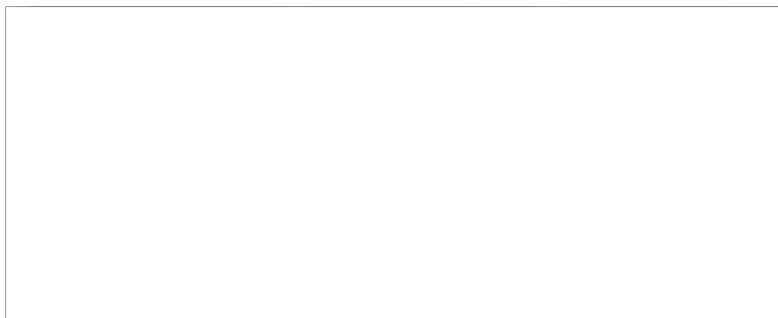
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NOTES

Cambodia: In the past few days, Khmer and Vietnamese Communist forces have occupied a number of government positions along Route 2 and now control much of that highway between the town of Takeo and the South Vietnamese border. The Communists apparently are trying to expand their supply corridor that runs through southern Takeo Province into the South Vietnamese delta. Most Cambodian troops have now pulled back from the Route 2 area, and only occasional South Vietnamese cross-border operations present any impediment to Communist logistical activities in this area. Meanwhile, government troops in the northwest are still making slow progress in their efforts to reopen the short stretch of Route 5 recently seized by the Communists. Once the highway is cleared, it will still take several weeks to repair damaged bridges.

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North Vietnam - Laos: The two aircraft that bombed the Lao Government stronghold at Bouam Long on 9 October were North Vietnamese IL-28 jet light bombers. This is the third time Hanoi's aircraft have conducted raids outside North Vietnam. AN-2 biplanes bombed a navigational site in northeastern Laos in 1968, and a MIG-17 attacked a US destroyer last April.

(continued)

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Burma: According to a Burmese diplomat, a Burmese decision "to cooperate more" in combating the illicit narcotics trade will be communicated to Ambassador Martin in Rangoon soon. The embassy notes that recently the Burmese authorities have been trying to curtail opium traffic across the Thai-Burmese border and placed the principal traffickers under surveillance. The last two commanders of the military region that embraces the main poppy-growing area have been replaced because of their protection of the illicit opium trade. Although Rangoon may be renewing its own efforts to clamp down on the narcotics traffic, any move toward joint suppression efforts with the US still appears unlikely.

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